

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council Takes Steps to Streamline Housing Approval Process in Maple Ridge

Maple Ridge: Last week Council directed staff to bring forward policy and bylaw amendments to support housing affordability. The changes will modernize, streamline and expedite the processes required to review and approve new housing projects.

“We know how much demand there is for housing in our community and across the region and Council is committed to collaborating with all levels of government to deliver housing across the spectrum of needs,” said Mayor Ruimy. “Council recognizes that as a local government we have a role to play in reducing any red tape associated with construction of new housing in the community. We are keen to move forward with these changes that will help meet Council’s goal of delivering new housing for our community at an accelerated rate.”

Staff will bring forward the following updates to processes and policies prior to summer:

- 1) A Council delegation bylaw and policy that enables the Director of Planning to approve development variance permits for certain minor variances and further delegation of development permits;
- 2) An update to City bylaws to permit certain rezoning applications that are consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP) to proceed without a Public Hearing, providing appropriate public notice has been made; and
- 3) Bylaw and policy amendments to enable additional means of publication for public notices beyond the posting of a public notice in the local newspaper.

Proposed policy changes still allow Council to determine if they would like a Public Hearing even if a project is compliant with the OCP guidelines.

These changes are due to the new powers granted to local governments by the BC Government’s Bill 26 to modernize and streamline approval processes. Specifically, the changes could reduce development variance permitting process times from four months to under a month and the elimination of the Public Hearing for OCP compliant projects could reduce approval times by three to six weeks.

This is one of many steps the City is taking to streamline processes. Other initiatives underway include:

- A development process review that will be brought forward to Council in the coming weeks.
- A new application processing system.
- A variety of options to increase rental housing stock.

The full report and recommendations can be found at mapleridge.ca/640 as part of the Feb. 28, 2023 Workshop Meeting agenda.